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Letter dated 31 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued today, 31 October 2002, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on some disturbing developments that would directly affect the peace and stability in my country and the entire Horn of Africa region.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ahmed Tahir **Baduri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The State of Eritrea
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Press statement

An axis of belligerence cannot be tolerated

In a press statement issued by its Ministry of Information, the Government of Ethiopia officially announces that it has established an axis with the Sudan and Yemen to perpetrate acts of subversion and aggression against Eritrea (the Sudan has issued similar statements, including one by the Sudanese Foreign Minister). Irrespective of its actual capabilities, the mere formation of an axis of belligerence against a sovereign State constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The causes of periodic tension and instability in our region are well known to merit elaboration. To underscore recent acts of regional destabilization we briefly cite the following:

- Ethiopia declared a war of aggression against Eritrea in May 1998 under the pretext of a "border dispute" and Eritrea's alleged invasion of the Ethiopian territory of "Badme". After a destructive war that claimed tens of thousands of lives, the Boundary Commission categorically confirmed, in its legal decision of 13 April this year, that Badme is indeed sovereign Eritrean territory. Ethiopia is now resorting to all sorts of obstructive and provocative acts to frustrate the implementation of the Boundary Commission in violation of the Algiers Peace Agreements and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

- Yemen is likewise involved in the violation of the decisions of the Arbitration Commission on the disputed Hanish islands and the delimitation of the maritime boundary between the two countries. Both Eritrea and Yemen had publicly accepted the binding decision of the Arbitration Commission, awarded years ago. For reasons that are not clear, Yemen is today raising claims that were unequivocally determined by the Arbitration Commission.

- The Sudan is on the list of countries sponsoring international terrorism. (Only on Tuesday this week, the Bush Administration renewed Presidential Executive Order 13067 on the National Emergency with Respect to Sudan because Khartoum continues to pose "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States" for acts including support to international terrorism and practising slavery.) In regard to Eritrea, Khartoum has been involved in providing sanctuary and training to Jihad terrorist elements for the last 10 years.

Each of the three countries of the axis has thus been individually pursuing bellicose policies of aggression and subversion against Eritrea for the past years. Recently, they have gone further to host a conference in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian

capital, of mercenary and Jihad groups for acts of terror and subversion against Eritrea.

The Ethiopian regime, which pretends to be the principal player in the unholy alliance, is involved in these irresponsible acts of aggression and regional destabilization in the midst of a severe drought that has struck the region and as Addis Ababa itself is requesting massive international assistance for millions of Ethiopians threatened with an acute food shortage.

The Government of Eritrea does not wish to exaggerate the capabilities of the axis whose individual members are embroiled in serious internal conflicts and crises. The intentions of the axis nonetheless represent a factor of regional instability and serious violations of international law. As such, they must be condemned by the international community.